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ABSTRACT

Coaching is needed at every stage in the transition from school leaver to effective worker. Teachers may need more industry work experience to become more effective coaches in the transition phase. A counselor or special teacher from the schools could follow the new recruits into the work force to give continued support and to act as a mediator with the managers. As school leavers become entry-level workers, managers need to coach the recruits in a systematic way so they "learn the ropes." One way to overcome some difficulties in orienting the school leaver (as new recruit) is to appoint a mentor, who is usually a more senior member of staff. Community coaches who link education and work are also needed. The Australian government could fund these coaches, who would come from all walks of life. Parents can be gathered together in community groups, and through the facilitation of community-industry liaison, trainers can establish links with industries and schools. Students and trainees may be their own best coaches. It makes sense to includes them in the planning of their education and training. A younger staff member may act as a peer coach or model. The organization can also provide the new recruit with the opportunity to participate in behavior modeling. The manager as coach and counselor must be available to answer questions and act as a base for reality testing. The coach as counselor can help ease the anxiety of the new recruit and assist in the organizational socialization process. (Contains 86 references.) (YLB)

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"Unless YOU become as effective coaches, THEY will not enter into the realm of committed workers."

Dr Kathryn Gow, School of Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Employers, educators and the community need to coach young people to assist in providing a skilled work force during increasing international economic competitive times so as to achieve both a highly skilled workforce and a socially fulfilled nation.

Before a school leaver completes grade 12, their teachers need to have adopted a coaching approach to practical tasks they'll encounter in the workforce.

Managers may not make the best coaches. The sort of people who are attracted to and are selected to management positions and who make great managers are normally people who like to focus on the big picture and cannot afford to get bogged down with too much detail.

Coaching requires a liking for detail or a preparedness to change one's focus for the purpose of the task at hand. This is why supervisors tend to make better coaches than managers; generally they are more concerned with their own areas, rather than the global workings of the organisational/external world interface.

There is an emerging need for a new breed of trainer: the community-industry liaison trainer (Gow, 1995b). The new community-liaison trainers may be people from all walks of life, with differing types of work experience. They will be involved in a variety of different training and coaching roles throughout industry, education and the community.

"Unless YOU become as effective coaches, THEY will not enter into the realm of committed workers."

Dr Kathryn Gow, School of Social Science, Queensland University of Technology

INTRODUCTION

EFFECTIVE COACHES = SUPPORTED NEW RECRUITS = COMMITTED WORKERS

As the title of this paper indicates, unless you coach school leavers, they may not ever become committed workers. Coaching is needed at every stage in the transition from school leaver to effective worker.

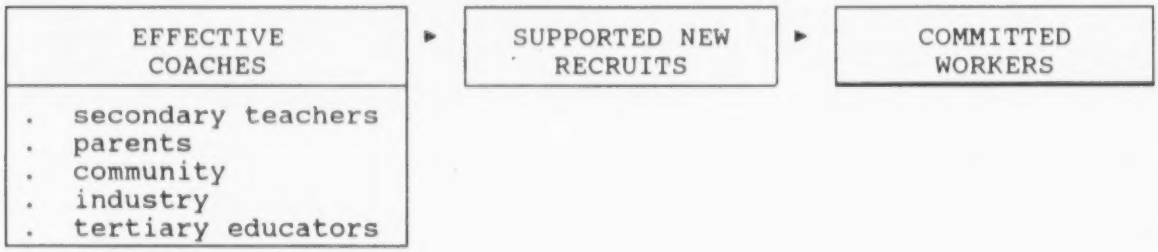

FIGURE 1: EFFECTIVE COACHES = COMMITTED WORKERS

Coaching is a particular kind of training approach/technology which teachers, parents and managers usually don't utilise.

Coaching is "about paying attention to people - really believing them, really caring about them, really involving them" (Peters & Austin, 1985 in Gurney, 1995, p. 4). Gurney claims that "clever

organisations will extend the talent in their workforce by appointing their most skilled people as specialist coaches (full or part time) to lift the skill level of others" (1995, p. 5).

These skilled people approach coaching as "a shared problem solution approach which communicates respect, is change oriented, disciplined in the sense that it follows an identifiable sequence of steps and can be initiated by either management or staff" (Sofo, 1993, p. 27).

Coaching is about "developing the ability and experience of trainees by giving them systematically planned and progressively more 'stretching' tasks to perform, coupled with continuous appraisal and counselling" (Buckley & Caple, 1991, p. 111).

For Kinlaw (1989, p. 19) coaching is "eyeball-to-eyeball management". Just as we need to have committed coaches to produce effective workers, we also need to have effective coaching to ensure those workers become committed to the organisation. Kinlaw (1989) maps out a successful coaching formula which includes clarity, competence, influence and appreciation. The new recruit needs to know the goals, values and priorities of the organisation.

In order to learn, the individual has to be confident about their learning ability and then can feel good about their competence as they acquire skills. They must be allowed to exert their influence on the training process by being involved in the planning and problem solving stages of their upskilling; and the manager must express appreciation to the staff member in such a way that it is

received at the appropriate time and is focused on the specific effort of the individual.

The only way to build staff commitment over time says Kinlaw is to provide assistance by giving: clear role definitions; resources, feedback and appreciation. By granting the individual freedom to act in their learning, we empower them by being authentic, and by allowing them to take risks which in turn leads to increased trust and autonomy in the workplace.

COACHES COME IN A VARIETY OF CLOTHING

Many articles now reveal a move towards coaching as a possible solution to bridging the training gap in the school to work transition dilemmas (Couch & Pell, 1993; Layoie & Lesgold, 1992; Ross, 1992; Rupert & Buschner, 1989; Scandura, 1992; Hagler & McFarlane, 1991; Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990; Evered & Selman, 1989, 1990; Showers, 1990).

FIGURE 2: COACHING DURING THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Coaching is required all through the transition. Understanding the new recruit is one part of a manager's role and preparing them for work is also part of the educator's role and a community responsibility.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AS TRAINERS

Little mention has been made of teachers as a resource, although school leavers have most access to teachers. However the literature indicates that teachers (Batten, 1989; Ramsay & Clark, 1990; Schools Council, 1990; Sturman, 1979) are considered by school leavers to be very helpful in their preparation for work.

Most school principals and teachers would think of coaching as something done on the sport fields, but it can be utilised in other aspects of the educational environment. Modelling how that is done well by excellent empowering sports coaches is one way for educators to learn how to transfer this concept into classroom settings.

Teachers may need to have more industry work experience in order to become more effective coaches in the transition phase. There is no necessity for all teachers to have to exchange placements in industry in order to provide real life work applications to young people at school. However 25% of all secondary school teachers should take part in an exchange scheme and the private and public sectors could assist here in providing exchanges for 6-12 months. The 25% of teachers involved would most probably be those who teach English and communication, economics, accounting, social studies,

manual arts, catering, tourism and business. All of the grade 11 and 12 teachers should be trained in how to apply their teaching to the work world and life in general.

It would be helpful to have a counsellor or a special teacher from the schools follow the new recruits into the workforce to give them continued support and to act as a mediator with the managers before removing the support system for the student. Their job is not over until the transition is completed.

MANAGERS AS EFFECTIVE COACHES

As school leavers become entry level trainees, managers need to coach the recruits in a systematic way in order for the new recruit to learn the ropes.

An effective manager has not traditionally been an effective coach. Quite often the position of the manager requires that he/she thinks in broad organisational terms and adopt a global or macro approach to management. Whereas coaching requires a micro approach, which is more akin to the traditional role of the technical supervisor who is required to have good skills for detail and think in terms of specific outcomes.

Often managers have become managers because of their high global thinking (intuitor in Myers Briggs terms, see Briggs Myers & Myers, 1985) skills and their abstract ability. To step down out of the big picture and go into detail is not easy for this type of manager. It may take some effective managers a period of

adjustment to learn the more detailed mechanisms of coaching and to become fully effective at helping the young person to learn (Johnson & Singer, 1985).

Successful use of coaching is a key competency for effective managers. The task of managing becomes an all-consuming responsibility and coaching skills become more, not less, important" (Walker, 1992 in Gurney, 1995). In order for managers to achieve higher order competencies, it is essential that their communication and counselling skills are well developed. Poor performance in these areas may hamper potential performance outcomes through the use of coaching.

Developing a well formed outcome is essential in any form of coaching both for higher and lower level staff (Dean, 1995). If managers overreact, or are impatient with the high number of mistakes that new recruits normally make, then the new recruit's self image and enthusiasm may suffer. If a manager is unsure and overcontrols the new recruits, it may be to keep them from making mistakes or to keep them from appearing too successful and knowledgeable. This prevents them from learning from mistakes or achieving recognition of their own (Stoner, 1978).

Marshall and Cacciope (1986) recommended managers learn communication skills such as effective listening, self-assertion, checking and clarifying.

All is not lost, however. Managers can learn coaching skills and need to do so in this Australian climate of competency based training and competency based assessment.

On the other hand, to be a great coach, a manager needs to be able to break a job or a task into component parts and coach the trainee through the steps in acquiring a new skill.

WORKPLACE MENTORS AS COACHES

One way to overcome some of the difficulties in orientating the school leaver (as new recruit) is to appoint a mentor (Pence, 1989), who is usually a more senior member of staff. Mentor systems, which are part of the formal organisational system, have also been advocated by Wall (1989).

COMMUNITY COACHES

Apart from managers and teachers adopting the coaching role, there is a need to employ more community coaches. What Australia needs right now are community coaches who link education and work. Their roles can be performed by people in the community who have both specific and general competencies to pass onto the youth in their areas.

The government could fund these community coaches who would come from all walks of life; retirees, unemployed, self employed, half time employed, house holders, business people and community association people, who have an interest in developing young people

and passing on their expertise and skills to them. Parents are part of the community and are important stakeholders in the training of their children fro the workplace.

PARENTS AS TRAINERS

It could be the parents of unemployed school leavers and university graduates, and the young people themselves who will provide the impetus for change. Parents can be gathered together in community groups and through the facilitation of community-industry liaison trainers can establish links with industries and schools. They do not have to be linked with the secondary schools which their own children attend and it may be more growth producing if they were not.

The role of parents as community-industry liaison trainers is one which links parents to other parents, teachers and students, not just to their own children. Some parents could be involved in creating computer games and industry programs with teenagers, and helping them develop survival skills in outdoor activities.

In the USA, many projects have been instigated which involve parents, schools and community groups jointly solving problems in the schools and finding jobs for school leavers and the general population. A review of the social contract between parents, students and the schools, together with industry and the community would be a useful consideration for future community development in the area of preparation for work and the generation of jobs.

In Australia, even though parents have been consistently acknowledged (Gow, 1995a; Carpenter & Western, 1989; Poole, 1983; Tinney, Benn and O'Neil, 1974) as playing a significant role in preparing their children for work, parents have been virtually ignored in any initiative taken by Government bodies concerned about the lack of preparation of school leavers for work.

Ramsay and Clark (1990) have suggested that a review be conducted to reevaluate the social contract between parents, students and the schools to determine what it is that the schools are supposed to be doing. Dawson (1989) has proposed that the gap between the educational decision makers and the local community can only be bridged by the involvement of special cultural groups, social agencies, university voluntary workers as well as parents, industry, students and the schools.

STUDENTS AND TRAINEES AS THEIR OWN BEST COACHES

The missing ingredient in the Australian National Training Agenda appears to be the students and workers who are to be trained. Very little communication has taken place with the students who are entering the workforce or who have just made the transition from school to work. It could be important for the grade 11 and 12 students to be involved in transition training programs even though they are not yet at work. They would be designing simulations, computer based training exercises and role plays in which they could learn appropriate performance responses in safe settings.

The ongoing feeling among employers is that young people are prepared to fill in the gaps in their basic training and education (Frigo, Montedoro, Dutto, Pasinetti & Vescia, 1989). Indeed it would appear that the school leavers believe that they themselves are the most helpful agent in the transition process from school leaver to effective worker (Gow, 1995c).

It would thus make sense to include them in the planning of their education and training. Such an approach has been confirmed by Pomerance (1990) and Zaccarelli (1988) who have intimated that the best way of training new employees is to involve them in the planning of training programs. Gent and Dell'omo (1989) maintained that employees should be involved not just in the preparation phases of training, but also in the presentation and evaluation phases.

It is important for mentors who can act as coaches to be appointed to assist the new recruit at entry point. However, these same mentors and coaches can act also as community-industry liaison trainers and go, not just to secondary schools where the grade 11 and 12 students are, but also out to the community where the unemployed young are and teach them the same workforce skills.

PEERS AS COACHES IN THE BUDDY SYSTEM

It is not just the manager who can act as a model for the employee. In the case of younger employees, it may be more pertinent to have a younger member of staff, or a member other than a manager, act as a peer coach or a model.

One such method proposed to ease organisational entry is the buddy system (McKenna, 1989), which is a part of the informal organisation system. The buddy is normally a person of the same age and status level as the new employee. Such co-workers, who act as peer providers, need to "have sufficient organisational experience and task skills more advanced than those of newcomers" (Comer, 1989, p. 85). Kimeldorf (1990) has suggested that these be chosen from employees with demonstrated skills as peer teachers.

EMPLOYEES AS MODELS IN THE COACHING PROCESS

The organisation can also provide the new recruit with the opportunity to be participate in behaviour modelling which has been recommended as a method of engendering the desired performance in subordinates. Behaviour modelling allows the new recruit to watch someone demonstrate the required behaviour, to practise those behaviours and then to receive feedback on their performance of those particular behaviours (Ferguson & Smith, 1988), in a way which is non-threatening, as the manager does not need to witness the subordinate's mistakes in the practice sessions.

Sims and Manz (1982) also believe that new employees can learn behaviours through the use of observational models. They suggest that a new recruit might be influenced by observing the consequences of a model's behaviour. According to Bandura and Walters (1959), new recruits would probably tend to favour models with whom they regularly associate and who have ability levels similar to their own. Comer (1989) considered that peers chosen as

the socialising agents "should have sufficient organisational experience and tasks skills more advanced than those of newcomers" (p. 86).

Goldstein and Sorcher (1974, in Bramley, 1991) used modelling successfully with supervisors who trained new recruits. The review of the modelling studies by Mayer and Russell (1987, in Bramley, 1991) reported that it is effective at the learning level.

Newcomers appear to prefer socialisation by their peers because they believe that people of their own level are more approachable than supervisors and older coworkers (Cowan, 1990). However Day (1988) also says that it is easier for the new recruit to become acclimatised to the new job if they can relate to a peer. Day cautions that there may be some drawbacks to using employees to train newcomers. It is also important for the managers to check that the employee is a good teacher as well as a top performer.

THE EFFECTIVE COACH: TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

Effective coaching behaviours for managers (Johnson & Singer, 1985) include: (1) checking the new recruit's understanding of instructions; (2) encouraging and responding to the new recruits by noticing their progression; (3) involving a new recruit in the task; (4) guiding and correcting the new recruit when problems are encountered and (5) being flexible in accepting the new recruit's ideas.

The good coach is the natural-born competencies determiner (Gow, 1993). The good coach knows exactly what steps are involved in a task and sets out the steps in the task (that is, the different levels of competencies) and assists the employee in attaining each of these goals (through a series of steps).

The good coach is honest, direct and caring. They believe in the employee's existing and potential abilities; they do not play games such as "if only"; "if it weren't for them"; "niggy sob" (see Transactional Analysis Journal). They do not blame the system or "pass the buck" up the system. The good coach is encouraging, positive, objective, calm, consistent, fair and follows through. They are good at goal setting and conducting feedback sessions. They are able to readily identify the gap between the present performance and the desired performance and to lead the employee on to advanced performance levels.

The good coach asks how the manager can change in a way that assists the employee. They ask which factors are present in the organisational system which are hindering and helping the employees' performance. The good coach keeps out of the emotional content, is non-defensive and treats the problem as a problem to be solved and not a person to be criticised. The good coach is future change oriented and can respect discipline and conduct mutual performance sessions with the staff member.

TRANSITION POINTS: LIFE AFTER SCHOOL

It is essential that the manager as coach and counsellor be

available to answer questions and act as a base for reality testing as the new recruit relates their experience of the maze of the work world.

FIGURE 3: BRIDGING THE GAP

Some of the experiences of the school organisational environments may be so associated with school leavers being treated as children, that they cannot conceive of similar experiences occurring in the workforce where they expect to be treated as adults. Thus they would take with them, into the workforce, an existing set of beliefs about authority structures and leadership styles, together with values about being in the world of adults and being treated as adults. The fact that they can be still treated as children by their bosses does not occur to them, or that adults are treated that way as well (Gow, 1994).

These beliefs and expectations may be mediated by the duration and intensity of their work experience both within school programs and

through extracurricular work experience. If school leavers cannot test out their role concepts and expectations about work beforehand, then there is no way in which they can carry out their normal hypotheses testing about the world of work before they enter it as a permanent worker.

It would help if the community coaches told them this could happen so they could be prepared for it. They can bounce off their ideas against a number of community coaches, especially if they do not have respect for teachers or parents or tend to disregard those persons' experiences of the work place.

Many young people are disappointed in the first few weeks or months in a new job (Louis, 1980) and some of this may be due to unrealistic expectations, the impact of which would have been considerably lessened by the interaction of community transition coaches.

TRANSITION POINTS: ORGANISATIONAL ENTRY

Organisational Entry and Socialisation

The coach as counsellor can help ease the anxiety of the new recruit. The first period in a new organisation is the most influential period of organisational socialisation (Van Maanen, 1975; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). "Organisational entry refers to new members joining organisations" (Wanous, 1976, p. 22). For the new recruits, there are three points to the entry process: "prior to entry (outsiders), shortly after entry (newcomers), and after

more experience (insiders)" (Wanous, 1976, p. 22). At the point of organisational entry, there are particular factors to be considered, such as socialisation, relationships with the supervisor, performance feedback and interpersonal skills.

Organisational socialisation provides the means by which individuals learn the ropes upon joining an organisation (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 1986) and involves a systematic process of bringing new employees into a firm's culture (Hellriegel et al., 1986; Pascale, 1985). Organisational culture, defined as "a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by organisational members" (Hellriegel et al., 1986, p. 340), is an important influence that school leavers and new recruits need to be made aware of, both prior to entry (in a general sense) and at entry point (in an organisation - specific context).

Unless teachers act as transition coaches or community coaches provide the link here, new recruits can suffer from profound reality shock, or organisational shock (Hall, 1976), which is unpleasant and disconcerting, as they discover many of their ideas and innovations are resisted because organisations take so long to change, and consequently many of these new recruits leave.

Feldman (1980) stated that new recruits were socialised through four processes: (1) the development of work skills and abilities; (2) the acquisition of appropriate role behaviours; (3) the adjustment to the work groups and its norm; and (4) the learning of organisational values. Feldman says that the development of work skills and abilities is affected by: (a) performance evaluation

policies. These factors are critical in the transition process from school to work. In order to be able to acquire appropriate role behaviours, a new recruit has to define his role in terms of: (i) his own work group; (ii) other work groups in the organisation; and (iii) other people outside the organisation. Only the manager acting as coach can assist here.

While Feldman (1980) tracked the successful socialisation process in terms of behaviours, expectations, anxiety and outcomes, he like others (Louis, 1980), were concerned about the feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction that occur in the early transition stages. Feldman (1980) said that often companies were busy creating organisational loyalty rather than dealing with the anxiety that new recruits brought with them.

The work socialisation process itself may have varying levels of discomfort or cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) associated with it, depending on the flexibility of the individual student's personal construct system (Kelly, 1955).
The need to learn new sets of behaviours on the job, new roles and new problem solving strategies which may result in the individual employing defence mechanisms (Aronson, 1972) as he copes with role conflict, role ambiguity and the conflicting messages about his job conveyed to him by significant roles senders (Milton, Entrekin & Stening, 1984).

The self esteem of even the most confident adults tends to take a battering as they struggle to digest all the new information in different jobs and as they adjust to the expectations others have about them in their new role in an organisation (Stoner, 1978).

According to Stoner et al. (1985) research has indicated that it is common for new recruits to feel anxiety when they first enter the organisation. "They worry about how they will perform on the job; they feel inadequate compared to more experienced employees and they are concerned about how well they will get along with their co-workers" (Stoner et al., 1985, p. 511).

It is normal that when a person is exposed to pressures which cause him to modify his attitudes, this pressure is likely to provoke anxiety or stress (Mansfield, 1972). Adoption of any new occupational status can involve considerable identity stress for the individuals concerned (Mansfield, 1972) and it is especially so for the new recruit.

ORGANISATIONAL ENTRY: ORIENTING THE NEWCOMER

The new recruit requires entry-level training activities to move on the next steps in the process of becoming an effective worker. Part of these entry-level activities include adequate induction and orientation activities. These are important coaching tools at the organisational macro level.

Much has been written about the induction and orientation requirements in the management literature (Brechlin & Rossett,

1991; Coblentz, Geber & Pribble, 1988; Cooke, 1989; Farrant, 1989; Geromel, 1989; Kaul, 1989; Moravec, Wheeler & Hall, 1989; O'Neill, 1988; Ray, 1988; Reinhardt, 1988; Small Business Report, 1988), but only a few authors have recognised the anxiety inherent in commencing a new job (McKenna, 1989; Zemke, 1989). Part of the coach's job is to monitor this anxiety level on organisational entry.

Zemke (1989) recommended that trainers and first-line supervisors make allowances for this anxiety, as no learning will occur until that anxiety diminishes; and in terms of the transition from new recruit to experienced recruit, Cowan (1990) believed that "making workers feel comfortable reduces the time they need to become effective" (p. 90). Employers should make "anxiety reduction one of the goals of an orientation program" (Zemke, 1989, p. 37) and "until the anxiety level goes down, the appropriate message won't stick anyhow" (Zemke, 1989, p. 37).

There is a need for coaching to prevent possible litigation issues. The steps in employer orientation are documented by Smith (1984). They include reviews of employer expectations and employee expectations. It is interesting to note that employers in Australia are legally responsible for adequately training their employees (Smith & Delahaye, 1987) and such training programs must be effective in achieving their objectives. "The employee is not responsible for poor performance on the job where that poor performance is due to lack of knowledge or understanding (in the absence of effective training)" (Smith & Delahaye, 1987).

It is at this point of the transition that new recruits begin to learn the *real ropes* of the organisation and to clarify what the managers expectations of them will be when they commence work on the job.

In the very early stages of the job, it is helpful to the new recruit to be informed about the office politics which may impact on his personal behaviour and work performance (Leibowitz, Schlossberg & Shore, 1991). New recruits need to be told about their specific roles and "how their roles fit in to the big picture" (Leibowitz et al., 1991, p. 45) and about formal policy and procedures. Preferably they will be given a peer sponsor who can act as a coach - "a positive influence who knows the ropes and can answer important questions without being in a position of authority" (Leibowitz et al., 1991, p. 47).

Because the time immediately after joining the organisation is critical in shaping the new recruit's attitudes and behaviours (Kafka & Schaefer, 1975), it is important to clarify the expectations, not just about what the manager expects of the new recruit, but also what the new recruit expects of the manager and the organisation.

Hopefully all new recruits arrive at the point of acclimation - that period when they have learned about their environment, they understand informal organisational structures and they have gained acceptance in the organisation (Sandler, 1984).

Early job experience probable plays a very critical role in the individual's career with the organisation (Stoner, 1978). If a new recruit has difficulty in attaining career goals, then that is a powerful predictor of job existing (Pearson, 1982). It is also common for turnover rates to be highest among the organisation's new recruits (Kaul, 1989; Leibowitz et al., 1991).

THE EFFECTS OF SUBCULTURES ON THE NEW RECRUIT'S PERFORMANCE

"Multiple cultures exist within an organisation. Organisations have a dominant or corporate culture that serves as a glue for the organisation, but they also have subcultures existing within each work unit, called work groups tasks subcultures" (Martin & Van Eck Peluchette, 1989, p. 60). "Belonging to the subculture will contribute to a person's identity and beliefs about herself and her world, in addition to that gained from the wider culture" (Porritt, 1990, p. 33).

Community transition coaches need to warn new recruits about the salt mines. Case study reports of new and experienced recruits (Gow, 1992) belonging to the *salt mines* subculture certainly influences the beliefs of recruits about themselves, and in terms of becoming outstanding effective workers, that subculture can influence their beliefs in a negative manner.

The *organisation trap* (Culbert, 1974) is the term used for shared assumptions in organisations which make people vulnerable to excessive influence by the system. They tend to accept the status quo for themselves that the section is boring and the job is dead

end. In order for employees in that section to break out of that mind set, they need to become conscious of the assumptions about the *salt mines* and then develop new ideas that will allow them to act in different ways.

New recruits need to know that lower-level-participants do have power (Mechanic, 1962) to influence the organisational system. If as Blackburn (1981) says that more contingencies that are controlled the more power the person has, then it will be more likely to be the *high fliers* who actively use this power, because they look for and are given more opportunities in the workforce. It could be that it is also the well educated employees who are given training in preference to those with poor education (Vaughan, 1989).

CONCLUSION

What is needed now is a marriage (not a loose knit arrangement) between the education system and industry, so that the secondary school teachers, students and industry training officers, managers and mentors can pinpoint the required skills for all entry-level jobs and create new alternatives for achieving those skills.

The writer advocates the creation of essential linkages in the future between these groups: students, schools, education systems, industry, community groups, parents, Government agencies and entry level workers. It is important that these industry based trainers paint the real picture of the world of work as it is.

Better use must be made of parents and teachers as resources for transition, because school leavers rely on them so heavily as helping agents, in the transition from school to work. As the school leavers own self (Gow, 1995a) is perceived to be the major helping agent, it is important to involve students not just in the planning of training programs after workforce entry, but also prior to workforce entry to raise their level of awareness about the issues involved in being an entry-level worker.

This could be done through a radical change process of new induction and orientation training processes for all entry-level workers and their superiors and not just school leavers. Modelling, the neglected training method in Australia, could be activated to teach work skills both to students at school and new recruits at work.

It is envisaged that establishing community-school-industry links and creating the new breed of coach in the guise of community-liaison trainers will improve the quality of training for entry-level workers and assist them to become committed workers.

The changes indicated in this article can only take place successfully with skilful intervention. There are many skilled organisational and community change agents, but unfortunately many of these change agents are often handicapped by being prophets in their own country. It is important that those skilled change agents now act as mentors and coaches and pass on those skills and strategies to large segments of the educational and social communities.

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